

Angie Lake

From: Elizabeth Fahling <fahling.elizabeth@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 4, 2018 10:56 AM
To: House Clerk; Angie Lake
Subject: SB 741

Dear members of the Local Governance Committee,

I would like this submitted for the public record, please enter this email into the testimony.

As a resident and home owner in Michigan I would like to submit my support for SB 741. I am not able to attend the Local Governance Committee meeting in person, but wish to strongly submit my support.

Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) is a discriminatory and inhumane practice that is costly to enforce and does not keep people or animals safe. BSL primarily targets "pitbull" type dogs and is contrary to peer reviewed investigation into dog genetics and behavior. As an example the City of Muskegon City Ordinance section 6-1 lists a dangerous dog as "Any pit bull dog. The term "pit bull dog" means any dog of one of the breeds known as Staffordshire Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Bull Terrier, or American Pit Bull Terrier, or any dog with the appearance and characteristics of being predominately of any one of such breeds, or combination thereof, or in combination with other breeds."

The reason for these ordinances is a misguided belief that pit bull type dogs are inherently and genetically more aggressive than other breeds, even breeds of similar size and strength. While there is no scientific evidence to support this belief, the example from Muskegon that I cited throws genetics out the window by saying that any dog that resembles a "pit bull type dog" would qualify as a dangerous dog and is subject to special regulation. This puts an undue burden on citizens as visual identification of dog breeds is completely subjective. What I think is a pitbull versus what you think is a pitbull versus what genetics says is a pitbull, might be completely different. Banning or restricting dogs based on this criteria is completely nonsensical and could not possibly keep people safe.

Furthermore, there is actually no scientific research that supports the idea that pitbull type dogs are more aggressive or dangerous than any other dog breed. There is actually a good amount of research that says the opposite.

Any dog can bite and any large/strong dog can cause potentially fatal injuries. The real way to keep people and animals safe is to enforce responsible dog ownership, spay/neuter, and teach humane education in schools and in the community.

For more information on this, Best Friends Animal Society has a very handy resource page that has the footnotes to the relevant research. <https://bestfriends.org/resources/pit-bull-terriers>

Thank you and have a lovely day,

Elizabeth Fahling. Resident of Muskegon County